

Testimony regarding H.B. 5040 The Governor's Proposed FY 23 Budget Adjustments for Human Services Agencies

Human Services Committee
Fernando Ricardo Valenzuela
March 17, 2022

Dear Senator Osten, Representative Walker and esteemed members of the Appropriations Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding the Governor's proposed budget for the Department of Social Services. My name is Fernando Ricardo Valenzuela and I live in Hartford, Connecticut.

Increasing access to HUSKY to include all income-eligible immigrants regardless of their status is not only of utmost importance, but a moral obligation and a basic standard we should uphold as we strive for becoming a more inclusive and caring society. As someone who worked on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic, I have seen firsthand how this lack of access—particularly for undocumented immigrants, but also for BIPOC and lower-income families—has negatively impacted families, children, and their loved ones. Despite the COVID-19 vaccine being available to all persons in the USA regardless of immigration status, the lack of access to insurance prevented access to a medical professional that could have disseminated this information to them in a timely and efficient manner. Furthermore, the racism deeply embedded throughout our medical systems, as well as society as a whole, instilled fears of deportation which directly contributed to lower vaccination rates among these groups. Expanding Husky to include all immigrants is an essential first step to break down some of the racial barriers immigrants have historically faced, which could begin the process of rebuilding trust in our medical system.

Health care is a human right that every person should have equitable access to, regardless of immigration status. This access provides individuals with tools, knowledge, and expertise that allow them to take better care of themselves. We cannot function as a society if we do not provide every member of our society with access to these resources—and it is our obligation to them to ensure that these resources are easily affordable.

All immigrants, regardless of their status, deserve access to health care. All BIPOC and low-income families deserve access to health care. Every person has a right to this access, and financial difficulties or racial barriers should not hinder or prevent this access.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today regarding the Governor's proposed budget for the Department of Social Services.

Sincerely,
Fernando Ricardo Valenzuela